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Memorandum of Understanding Established

Between U.S. Federal Transit Administration and U.S. Administration on Aging

The U.S. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) recently joined forces to coordinate and facilitate access to transportation services by older adults. Individually, the two administrations have spent hundreds of millions each year to meet the transportation needs of older adults, many of whom rely on public transportation for access to health care, social services, shopping, and recreation. The effort to coordinate should create synergies between the two agencies that will benefit our aging population.

Under the new agreement FTA and AoA will work together toward the following objectives:

Objective 1

Increase awareness of the transportation needs of older adults and the importance of developing strategies that can be used to address these needs.

Objective 2

Establish baseline data regarding transportation services addressing the needs of older persons,

including existing transportation system characteristics, customer satisfaction and innovative services and transportation coordination models.

Objective 3

Develop and implement a joint plan to provide ongoing technical assistance and training to state and local agencies and organizations in an effort to promote and implement promising practices related to the coordination of transportation services.

Objective 4

Work collaboratively with stakeholders at national, state, and local levels to identify barriers and solutions to accessing transportation services, and to get their ongoing input on the strategies and activities FTA and AoA will use to carry out this agreement.

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Notes from the Top

It's a new year and the Public Transportation staff hopes that everyone had a safe and happy holiday season and is enjoying 2003. Many important events have happened since our last issue; I'll share those and some upcoming events with you.

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, the Inter-Agency Transportation Coordination Committee (IATCC) determined that a Forum was needed to assess the current state of transportation coordination among Louisiana State Agencies. The IATCC hosted a Transportation Services Coordination Forum on February 19th at the Radisson Hotel in Baton Rouge. The goals of the Forum were to give transit systems, riders and other interested persons a chance to voice their opinion on the state of transportation coordination. We received some good feedback from the audience and a report on the results will be posted on our website.

Speaking of our website... If you have internet access and have not seen our new site, please take a moment to browse through the postings. You will find a 2002 map of transportation providers in Louisiana, along with a host of other useful information. There are application forms, instruction

manuals for many of the programs DOTD administers, program descriptions, contact information, back newsletter issues, and useful links to other sites. We encourage you to provide comments and suggestions to Kay Ryall by mail, email or telephone.

The Public Transportation staff welcomes a new member to its ranks. Michael Watts was hired into the Accountant position on January 6, 2003. Mike is a great addition to our staff and will provide much needed relief in the invoicing and billing department. We hope that you will all get a chance to meet Mike and welcome him and the talents he brings to our section.

During the week of February 10, our staff was in the field with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) consultants conducting Substance Abuse Audits. Eight of our transit providers underwent an intensive inspection of their policies and procedures relating to FTA's requirements on the subject. There were several deficiencies documented which should be corrected through additional training in FTA's Substance Abuse Regulations. Thanks to the Auditors for making valuable recommendations to DOTD and our systems to help correct the deficiencies. Thanks to my staff, our providers, medical review



officers, substance abuse professionals, and other local officials for all your hard work.

We rarely take the time to express how much we really appreciate someone until they have moved on. Salvador F. "Sal" Faldetta retired from DOTD in January after nearly 36 years of dedicated service to the State of Louisiana, 32 of which were served at DOTD. Sal headed the Financial Services Section and was especially courteous and helpful to my staff and me over the years. Sal is retiring to spend more time with his family, especially his three grandchildren. Sal, you will be missed; we wish you and Elvie much happiness in this special time of life.

On another personal note, many of you know that Gene Eddy, General Manager of SPORTRAN in Shreveport, and his family have

recently lost their son Alex. This comes after a long battle with an extremely rare disease. Just nine days short of his 15th birthday, Alex succumbed to the disease that he valiantly fought against his entire life. All of us at the Public Transportation Section have had and will continue to have Gene and his family in our thoughts and prayers.

If you have suggestions or comments regarding this newsletter, or if you would like to contribute an article and/or pictures, please forward that information to Wanda Walker (see Staff contact information).

Events Calendar

2nd North American Intermodal
Transportation Summit
April 8-9, Denver, CO

APTA Commuter Rail Conference
April 13-16, Chicago, IL

APTA Bus & Paratransit Conference
May 4-8, Milwaukee, WI

Women's Transportation Seminar
2003 National Conference
May 14-16, Boston, MA

CTAA EXPO 2003
May 18-23, Philadelphia, PA

APTA Rail Transit Conference
June 7-12, San Jose, CA

APTA Risk Mgmt Seminar
June 22-25, Newport Beach, CA

State Public Transit
Partnerships Conference
July 13-16, Albuquerque, NM

FTA/AASHTO State Program
Managers Conference
July 29-31, Washington, D.C.

**DOTD/LPTA Public
Transportation Conference**
October 27-29, Alexandria, LA

National Transportation Institute Training Classes

Paratransit Scheduling and Dispatching
April 2-3, Baltimore, MD

Public Involvement in Transportation
Decision-making
April 1-3, Seattle, WA

June 3-5, Kingston, RI

June 17-19, Tampa, FL

Orientation to Transit Procurement
April 7-11, Concord, NH
May 5-9, Los Angeles, CA

An Effective Contract
Modification Process
April 29-30, Oakland, CA

May 13-14, Atlanta, GA

June 10-11, Cleveland, OH

Transportation Programming
April 9-11, Pittsburgh, PA

Metropolitan Transportation Planning
May 6-8, New Orleans, LA

Statewide and Metropolitan Transit
Capacity and Quality of Service
May 7-9, New Brunswick, NJ

Statewide Transportation Plan Update



Spotlight on...



Statewide Transportation Plan Update

Since July 2000, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development has been working on an update to the long-range transportation plan. Significant resources; time, money, and personnel; have been committed to the effort. The purpose of the Plan update is to develop a planning and policy framework to guide transportation investment in Louisiana over the next 30 years. A draft of the Plan was recently introduced to the public.

At a transportation conference held January 9-10, 2003, the Draft Statewide Transportation Plan Update was introduced. The Plan addresses the movement of people and goods across all modes of transportation including highways, aviation, railroads, trucking, ports and waterways, surface passenger transportation, and bicycle/pedestrian. The conference was followed by a series of eight meetings throughout Louisiana to obtain public input.

The planning process was guided by the Louisiana Investment in Infrastructure for Economic Prosperity (LIIEP) Commission, which was created through Act 437. Dr. Kam K. Movassaghi, Secretary of DOTD, chairs the LIIEP

Commission. Several other state agencies are represented on the Commission, including the Legislature. The Commission also has representation from the private sector.

Throughout development of the Plan update, input was solicited from eight Advisory Councils:

- ✍ Aviation Advisory Council
- ✍ Freight Railroad Advisory Council
- ✍ Intelligent Transportation Systems Advisory Council
- ✍ Intermodal Advisory Council
- ✍ Ports and Waterways Advisory Council
- ✍ Regional Planning Official Advisory Council
- ✍ Surface Passenger Advisory Council
- ✍ Trucking Advisory Council

The seven modal Advisory Councils reported to the Intermodal Advisory Council, which reported to the LIIEP Commission.

Patrick Judge, who is also the President of the Louisiana Public Transportation Association, chaired the Surface Passenger Advisory Council. The remainder of the Surface Passenger Advisory Council consisted of a good mix of persons

from both the public and private sector who deal with surface passenger issues and many who deal directly with public transportation.

The Draft Plan includes four revenue scenarios over the next 30-year period. For more information on these scenarios, please visit the DOTD website at www.dotd.state.la.us.

The implementation of this updated long-range plan will be a process that the public transportation providers in Louisiana will follow closely. Of particular interest to the public transportation community is one of the recommended programs and projects that result if Scenario 2 or 3 is implemented:

ESTABLISH STATEWIDE RURAL PUBLIC TRANSIT PROGRAM, STATE SHARE = \$6-MILLION/YEAR.

Also of interest to our community is Goal 2 in the Plan:

Goal 2: To provide essential passenger-transportation services at reasonable public expense, meeting the diverse needs of the people of Louisiana regardless of their geographic location, physical condition, economic status or service requirements.

- ✍ Define appropriate minimum levels of passenger-transportation service, considering reasonable public expenditure, to provide access to, and within all regions of the State;
- ✍ Increase accessibility of individuals to employment, educational/vocational training opportunities, and to high-quality health-care services; and
- ✍ Develop special programs to address the needs of the elderly and handicapped.

The Plan addresses several of the critical issues facing public transportation in Louisiana. The plan correctly identifies the lack of local matching funds as a critical issue. However, the problem is getting worse instead of better. The total number of rural public transportation providers in the State has decreased since the data was first collected; this due mainly to a lack of adequate local matching funds.



During the Conference in January, Secretary Movassaghi said, "The very economic development life of the State of Louisiana is dependent on a very efficient, very robust transportation system. If we don't have this... we will die a slow death." The Secretary is correct. Included in that transportation system is adequate public transportation for the citizens of Louisiana. This plan and the funding scenarios it proposes will be critical to our future in Louisiana. It is incumbent on each of us to participate and support the future transportation goals and objectives proposed in this Plan.

Transportation Services Coordination Forum

On February 19, 2003, the Inter-Agency Transportation Coordination Committee (IATCC) hosted a Transportation Services Coordination Forum at the Radisson Hotel in Baton Rouge. Public transportation providers, legislators, State agency heads, and other interested parties were all invited to come and provide input on the state of public transportation service coordination. The main goal of the Forum was to identify barriers - or perceived barriers - to coordinated public transportation services funding in the State.



In 1996, Governor M. J. "Mike" Foster recognized the need for coordinated services throughout the state and issued Executive Order MJF 96-18, thereby creating the IATCC. The IATCC has eight original member agencies that either directly fund or have some input into funding public transportation services for some sector of Louisiana's population. Representatives of other state agencies and offices regularly attend IATCC meetings.

The Forum was a qualified success. While IATCC members received outstanding input on issues faced by public transportation providers in Louisiana, the Forum was not as well attended as expected. Notably absent were many of the more vocal stakeholders who expressed great interest in coordinated funding for public transportation services. Issues covered and overall Forum results will be available soon on the LaDOTD website.



Memorandum ...

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Objective 5

Work together to better coordinate the provision of funding opportunities to the aging services and transportation networks to foster coordination of transportation services and the development of innovative service delivery models.

AoA and FTA will develop and implement work plans each calendar year to guide the process of meeting these goals and objectives. Each administration will dedicate staff to the coordinated effort reached through this Memorandum of Understanding.

From Capital Hill ...

A recent Community Transportation Association (CTAA) Federal News Flash discussed significant Congressional issues that may influence community transportation's prospects this year. They include renewed efforts to adopt a comprehensive national energy policy and wide-ranging calls for reforms to Medicare and other federal funded health care programs. This and other CTAA Federal news may be found by visiting the **Federal** page of the CTAA website (www.ctaa.org).